
#31. Steven McLaughlin
MANAGING PARTNER,
Financial Technology Partners
Top Ranked Investment Banker



FINANCIAL TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS, a San Francisco boutique billed by managing partner Steven McLaughlin as “the only investment bank focused exclusively on the financial technology sector,” has been scouting out and winning dealmaking roles since the former Goldman, Sachs & Co. technology banker founded the firm in 2002. Now with a staff of 24, FT Partners advised Automated Trading Desk on its \$680 million buyout by Citigroup in July 2007 and market-data technology company Wombat Financial Software on its \$200 million sale to NYSE Euronext in March. It also advised TradingScreen on a \$110 million recapitalization in September 2007 and MarketAxess on the sale of a \$35 million stake in June – both investments led by Silicon Valley’s Technology Crossover Ventures. McLaughlin stresses the value of an independent perspective, noting that bulge-bracket banks’ ownership of interests in, or purchases of products from, high-tech startups could compromise their advice. “Whether you are in bed with Wall Street or competing with Wall Street, we are the great answer in financial technology,” asserts the 39-year-old. He says the NYSE’s purchase of Wombat – Merrill Lynch & Co. was a shareholder – indicates how exchanges are “more willing to compete with the sell side in the provisioning of technology to clients.”

The Online Finance 40

With everything from Web 2.0 features to new trading platforms, these innovators are driving the pace of technological change in financial services.

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AS AN INVESTMENT bank that's focused exclusively on financial technology, San Francisco's Financial Technology Partners finds it advantageous to not be a name-brand Wall Street firm. More often than not, a big bank or brokerage house is on the other side of the table negotiating the deals guided by Steven McLaughlin, founder and managing partner of FT Partners. In late 2005 the firm represented New Yorkbased Investment Technology Group when it acquired Plexus, a developer of transaction cost-analysis systems, from JPMorgan Chase & Co., and again in early 2006 when it acquired privately held Macgregor Group, a leading provider of order management technology, for \$230 million. Last month McLaughlin, a 38-year-old former Goldman, Sachs & Co. banker, advised Automated Trading Desk, a Charleston, South Carolinabased provider of automated trading and order execution systems, on its \$680 million acquisition by Citigroup. FT Partners broke into the European market last year when it advised on the sale of White Plains, New York based Communicator, operator of SecuritiesHub, to London's Markit Group (see Lance Uggla, No. 28). "The financial technology sector continues to be a hotbed for entrepreneurs and capital providers to meet and create new ways of doing business," says McLaughlin.



The logo for 'The Online Finance 40' is positioned vertically on the left side of the page. It features the words 'The Online Finance' in a green, sans-serif font, with 'The' in a smaller size. The number '40' is significantly larger and rendered in a blue, sans-serif font. To the left of the '40' are three curved green lines that resemble a signal or broadcast icon.

Institutional Investor's annual ranking of the most influential people on wired Wall Street, the Online Finance 40.

Steven McLaughlin

MANAGING PARTNER, *Financial Technology Partners*

Not ranked last year

"We're good at getting high valuations for our clients."



When early investors in Liquidnet Holdings were looking to cash out a portion of their investment in the buy-side block-trading network, its CEO, Seth Merrin (see No. 13), called on San Francisco-based Financial Technology Partners rather than Merrill Lynch & Co., even though Merrill had been Liquidnet's placement agent on a previous financing. FTP founder and managing partner Steven McLaughlin arranged for Summit Partners and Technology Crossover Ventures to buy a minority stake in Liquidnet in February for \$250 million. McLaughlin, 37, boasts that it is "the highest price that venture capital firms have ever paid for a minority stake in a technology company." Just the month before, McLaughlin had advised New York-based equity trading company Investment Technology Group on its \$230 million acquisition of Macgregor Group, a Boston-based provider of trade order management systems. The FTP founder, who has an MBA from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, recalls that when he joined Goldman, Sachs & Co.'s financial services mergers and acquisitions group in 1994, "there was no such thing as financial technology." He went on to co-head a Goldman group created to focus on that very business but went out on his own in 2002. McLaughlin says his firm "prides itself on getting involved in complex situations."